

REMARKS

This application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

The Official Action rejects claims 1-3 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over HYMAN et al. in view of SIGNAIGO. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are requested for the following reasons:

Of the rejected claims, claims 1 and 7 are independent. Each of such independent claims has been amended to introduce steps of providing specifically identified apparatus and manipulating such apparatus to perform the orienting process that underlies the claims.

The newly added steps recite features of the present invention that are clearly neither taught nor suggested by either of the applied references. Such features also are neither taught nor suggested by the cited but unapplied LEPOUTRE et al. reference. The Official Action offers the LEPOUTRE et al. reference for its disclosure of a tenter apparatus.

While the LEPOUTRE et al. patent describes a device that exists generally in the same class of the devices as that disclosed and claimed by the present application, it nevertheless fails to either teach or suggest the full set of features recited by the present claims. This results at least in part from the application of the LEPOUTRE et al. device and method, namely forming a slit film. This is far removed from the orienting

method used in the manufacture of polarizing films of the present invention.

The HYMAN reference describes and illustrates that the wiper elements are disposed between two processing baths.

In contrast, in the present invention the draining member and the draining blades are disposed at the position to which the polymer film reaches within 10 seconds after passing through the respective processing baths according to the conveyance speed of the PVA film, as described on page 10, line 9 through page 11, line 3. These positions are on the upper side of the processing bath (see elements 21, 22, and 23, Figure 2). The cited reference clearly fails to disclose or suggest such feature.

As the identified combination of references fails to render obvious the invention recited by amended claims 1 and 7, applicants respectfully suggest that the present obviousness rejection cannot reasonably be maintained.

The Official Action rejects claims 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over HYMAN et al. and SIGNAIGO, and further in view of MOSHREFZADEH et al. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are requested for the following reasons:

The Official Action offers the additional MOSHREFZADEH et al. reference for its asserted teaching or suggestion of a cleaning bath to remove plasticizers. However, regardless of the

ability of the MOSHREFZADEH et al. reference to teach or suggest that for which it is specifically offered, it nonetheless fails to overcome the shortcomings of the HYMAN et al. and SIGNAIGO references for the reasons addressed above in connection with the first obviousness rejection. As the rejected claims ultimately depend from amended claim 1, applicants respectfully suggest that the present rejection cannot be maintained.

The Official Action rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over HYMAN et al., SIGNAIGO and MOSHREFZADEH et al., and further in view of SCHULER. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are requested for the following reasons:

The Official Action offers the additional SCHULER reference for its asserted teaching or suggestion of a second wiping station for removing borating hardening solution. However, regardless of the ability of the SCHULER reference to teach or suggest that for which it is specifically offered, it nonetheless fails to overcome the shortcomings of the HYMAN et al. and SIGNAIGO references for the reasons addressed above in connection with the first obviousness rejection. As the rejected claims ultimately depend from amended claim 1, applicants respectfully suggest that the present rejection cannot be maintained.

In addition to the amendment of independent claims 1 and 7 to recite features related to providing and utilizing specifically recited apparatus, applicants have amended withdrawn

claims 21-26. The preamble of each claim has been amended to properly depend ultimately from method claim 1. Applicants respectfully request that amended claims 21-26 be returned to consideration, as each further defines a claim that is directed to the elected invention of original claims 1-7.

In light of the amendments defined above and the arguments offered in support thereof, applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or requires further clarification of any of the above points, the Examiner may contact the undersigned attorney so that this application may continue to be expeditiously advanced.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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